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Published data and documents relating to the Environmental Restoration Program are available for public review in information repositories at four locations. The current information repositories are located in the cities of Boron, Lancaster and Rosamond, as well as Edwards AFB. They are updated when new documents are released.

If you have any questions about information in the repositories, please contact Gary Hatch, Environmental Public Affairs at (661) 277-1454 or through e-mail at gary.hatch@edwards.af.mil.



Location	Days and Hours of Operation
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Edwards AFB Library 5 W. Yeager Blvd. Building 6225 Edwards AFB, Calif. (661) 275-2665	Mon-Thurs 9:30 a.m. - 7 p.m. Fri. 9:30 a.m. - 6 p.m. Sat & Sun 10:30 a.m. - 6 p.m.
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Los Angeles County Public Library 601 W. Lancaster Blvd. Lancaster, Calif. (661) 948-5029	Mon-Wed 10 a.m. - 8 p.m. Thu & Fri 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. Sat 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.
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Col. Vernon P. Saxon, Jr. Aerospace Museum 26962 Twenty Mule Team Road Boron, Calif. (760) 762-6600	Mon-Sun 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.
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**Report to Stakeholders Staff**

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Report to STAKEHOLDERS

<http://www.edwards.af.mil/penvmng/index.html>

RIDERS OF THE RANGE

Full coverage page 4

INSIDE

Get to know
 Environmental
 Restoration
 project manager and
 engineer Tom Merendini.
 Profile on page 3.



Range rider
 Erica Maier

Range rider
 Matt Basham

May 2005



Volume 10 No. 5





If you have a question about the Edwards Air Force Base Environmental Management program, you may address it to Stakeholders Forum, Attn: Gary Hatch or Miriam Harmon, 5 E. Popson Ave., Edwards AFB, CA 93524-8060, or send e-mail to: afftcm.com.rel@edwards.af.mil

Next RAB Meeting

May 19, 2005
5:30 p.m.
Lancaster
Cole Middle School
3126 East Ave. I

The public is invited.

Report to Stakeholders is a publication of the Edwards AFB Environmental Management Division. Its purpose is to inform and educate the public, base workers and residents about continuing Environmental Management efforts at Edwards AFB. It currently has a circulation of 6,000, including about 2,000 subscribers.

Contents of the *Report to Stakeholders* are not necessarily the official view of, or endorsed by, the U.S. government, the Department of Defense, or the Department of the Air Force.



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Report to STAKEHOLDERS



PASS IT ON — Biologist Andrea Currylow, far left, watches over kindergarteners from Bailey Elementary, located on Edwards Air Force Base (AFB), while they touch and pet a young desert tortoise.

Biologists educate young minds about tortoises

Natural Resources Management, a branch under Conservation at Environmental Management, conducts educational outreach programs to inform those on and off base about resources like desert tortoises, wildlife sensitivity and wildflowers.

Environmental Management has animal exhibits located in its building lobby for many outreach events like Edwards AFB's Family Day, Earth Day or the occasional class.

Natural Resources biologists try to accommodate surrounding communities that request a presentation, like the desert tortoise presentation pictured above, given to kindergarteners from Bailey Elementary on base.

Biologists also give briefings about the local wildlife for those who work and live on base.

RANGE

FROM page 5

because they do not always involve noticeable traces on the landscape," said Range Rider Matt Basham. "We know by experience what certain archaeological sites look like and make inferences that looting has occurred based on the absence of intact artifacts on a site.

"But, because most archaeologists err on the side of caution, we would never make an absolute statement regarding looting in this case because we don't know for sure."

There are many homesteads and

archaeological sites on base that may get looted, damaged, vandalized or dumped on illegally.

Archaeological sites on the base are federally protected. The scientific value and integrity of a site is lost when sites are damaged or artifacts are stolen. "In archaeology, context is everything," Basham said. "Once the artifact is collected the context is destroyed and can't be reconstructed."

With modern archaeology, archaeologists will record all sorts of information before disturbing the context where something was first discovered.

"Range riders at Edwards AFB will

Homesteads at Edwards Air Force Base

Homesteads on Edwards AFB are one of the many types of archaeological sites range riders protect. On base, there are 435 homesteads.

A homestead may include the remains of any permanent or semipermanent occupation structure of EuroAmerican design.

Homesteads are nonmilitary, mining or railroad related and include foundations, standing walls, outbuildings, fence lines, corrals, wellheads and other features.

Types of homesteads on base include, homestead, stock raising homestead, soldier's or sailor's homestead, desert land, and timber culture. Most of these lands were acquired in the early 20th century, largely during World War I.

The Corum family is a familiar homestead lot at Edwards AFB. In the early 1900s, the Corums and other homesteaders lived in the same area of Rogers Dry Lake. Pancho Barnes and Chuck Yeager also lived on homesteads at Edwards.



TERRAIN RIDING — Range riders receive training to ride these quads on the base perimeter and at places like archaeological sites as a part of their jobs. They also use government-issued SUVs.

focus on a particular area and stake it out if necessary. They will record the data at places where things are happening," Norwood said. "They are responsible to protect and respond."



HOME ON THE RANGE — A part of the many homestead sites on Edwards AFB is seen above. The photo to the left is what remains of a homestead where Chuck Yeager once lived.

MERENDINI

FROM page 3

tion with key players ... training and troubleshooting issues for base facilitators, keeping accurate tracking records for inspectors, and scheduling transportation and disposal of hazardous waste with DRMO.

"Edwards AFB is responsible for tracking hazardous waste from cradle to grave," Merendini said. "Communication is vital to ensure we know the location and status of the base's hazardous waste at all times."

In 2004, Merendini shifted over to the ERP — working as a program manager on Operable Units (OUs) 6, 7 and 8. One of his biggest projects involves the proposed plan for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration Dryden Flight Research Center's OU 6.

"The OU 6 proposed plan is a challenge," Merendini said. "A lot of technical and legal jargon needs to be addressed in that plan, but we still want the public to find the information readable and interesting. We have to strike the right balance."

The OU 6 proposed plan was released to the public for review and comment the first week of April, and will continue until May 1.

Merendini manages 35 active cleanup sites located on OUs 7 and 8, which are at different stages in the cleanup process. Merendini attributes communication as the reason he manages all of these projects successfully.

Merendini has experienced the benefits of this teamwork after a demolition at the base's hospital clinic uncovered an underground storage tank. The discovery happened at the same time Wesley Nicks, Kern County Environmental Health Services Department regulator, was visiting Edwards AFB. Merendini took Nicks to the site, where they evalu-

ated the tank and proposed a cleanup solution on the spot.

"Everyday I make the environment a little bit cleaner and safer for people," Merendini said. "The state of the environment directly affects people and a healthy environment equates to healthy people. Environmental Management should serve as the public trust to protect human health and the environment."

As a boy, Merendini had a strong interest in the environment. He fondly remembers spending summers at his grandfather's country house at Long

neering firm allowed Merendini a job offer later. He worked at the firm for a few years before coming to the realization that something was missing.

"I loved engineering and the environment, and I wanted more interaction with people. I knew that working as an environmental engineer would be the best way for me to combine all of these elements together," Merendini said.

He accepted a job with the New York State Health Department as a sanitary engineer, where he enforced the Safe Drinking Water Act. As the state regulator

for nine counties, Merendini became an expert on drinking water regulations and worked closely with his colleagues to make sure drinking water standards were up to code and treatment facilities passed inspection.

It wasn't until his move to China Lake that Merendini gained experience in other aspects of environmental management.

The naval base hired him as an environmental engineer around the same time their cleanup program was start-

ing.

"I helped initiate China Lake's restoration program and hired environmental engineers to manage the program," Merendini said. "Environmental laws and regulations were new, and I ended up training a lot of the people we hired."

As one of the first environmental engineers on site, Merendini was consulted on many different projects involving cleanup, hazardous waste management, and underground storage tanks. He continued to act as a consultant even when he was promoted to supervisor of hazardous waste management.

Merendini still makes time to explore the environment. On weekends he goes hiking, horseback riding, and takes photographs of the California landscape. With a wife, two daughters, three horses and five wolfhounds, Merendini has plenty of company for his nature excursions.

"If you communicate well with your team members, everyone is aware of the issue. Understanding and progress become easier to achieve."

Tom Merendini
ERP Program Manager
Environmental Management

Island, N.Y.

"My value system developed early from hiking and fishing in the woods," Merendini said. "Although my family lived in Brooklyn, N.Y., summer vacations were spent experiencing nature and wildlife. Those experiences gave me a deep appreciation for the environment: It has stayed with me throughout the years."

As a teenager, Merendini discovered an affinity for engineering and mechanics through a high school job at a machine shop. Combining his talents and interests, Merendini graduated from Northeastern University in Boston, with a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering.

"At the time, environmental engineering was not a separate major. It was a subset of civil engineering," Merendini said. "All of the environmental courses I took counted toward my civil engineering degree."

A college internship at a civil engi-



TALKING

Tom Merendini joined the Environmental Restoration Program in spring 2004. He is a program manager for Operable Units 6, 7 and 8. Here he is seen giving a presentation to some of the members of the Restoration Advisory Board about the OU 6 Proposed Plan.

Communication is key for ERP Manager Tom Merendini

With over 29 years of work experience in the environmental field, Tom Merendini understands the rewards and difficulties associated with protecting the environment and human health. Ask this member of the Environmental Restoration Program (ERP) about the most important part of his job, and he will tell you that it is communication.

As an environmental engineer, Merendini has learned an important lesson over the years — that communication is an es-

sential ingredient for any successful program.

"Without communication, you have confusion, and progress comes to a halt," Merendini said. "If you communicate well with your team members, everyone is aware of the issues. Understanding and progress become easier to achieve."

His proactive approach to communicating has enabled Merendini to reach a wider audience.

"If you get to know people, their interests, values, history, it's easier to understand where their concerns are; and you can work to keep them informed on the issues that matter most to them," Merendini said. "It helps me to remember that not everyone is an environmental engineer. Whenever I get too technical, I see people's eyes glaze over. There's no point in speaking if your audience cannot understand or relate to what you're saying."

Frequent communication provides Merendini with timely status updates from his contractors, early resolutions for problems, and ensures the regulators are pleased with the progress and direction of each site.

"Environmental Management and its regulators work as a team to clean up contamination in a time- and cost-effective manner," Merendini said. "Talking with our regulators and being aware of what they want from our program helps us anticipate and meet their expectations."

About five years ago, Merendini came to Edwards AFB to work with the hazardous waste program. The program required constant coordination between base facilities, state regulators, Department of Defense contractors, and the Defense Reutilization Marketing Office, or DRMO, to maintain timely compliance. Drawing on his experience from China Lake, Merendini made communication a priority. His team exchanged a steady stream of informa-

See Merendini page 6



Range riders help preserve base's archaeological sites

Unique to Edwards Air Force Base (AFB), two range riders exist for the sole purpose of documenting any out-of-the-ordinary activity within close proximity to or on the base.

Cultural Resources Management fully implemented a unique program over two years ago that places archaeologists out in the field to protect key archaeological sites, find new sites, and report unauthorized activity that occurs on the perimeter of Edwards AFB, or, within its boundaries, to the proper law enforcement agency.

The legislation that makes the range riders' jobs on base important comes from the Archeological Resource Protection Act (ARPA). The ARPA can be found on the National Park Service Website at www.cr.nps.gov/hps/laws/archprotect.htm.

The program was not an institutionalized Air Force program until Marty Tagg, the archaeologist at Air Force Materiel Command headquarters located at Wright-Patterson AFB,

Ohio ran a program at Holloman Air Force Base, New Mexico. It was there that a couple of volunteers were implemented.

Edwards AFB decided to take the opportunity and test it. The range rider program on base started on a 90-day trial basis in December 2002. After the trial ended, Environmental Management (EM) decided to keep the

program running, based on its reliability and outcome. There was enough unauthorized activity taking place on or around the base to keep it.

"The purpose of the program is to protect sites in all aspects," said Rick Norwood, base archaeologist. "Range riders are archaeologists, but if they see an activity that is out of the ordinary they will respond to it."

We are protecting archaeological sites, but we are also protecting other environmental sites. It's an all-purpose program, really, and it is another level of protection for the base."



Base range rider on an all-terrain vehicle.

With over 3,500 archaeological sites on base and more being discovered, EM employs two range riders who spend most of their time out in the field. They check for and record new activity, following up on archaeological sites, record fence and gate damage, record sightings and encounters of unauthorized activity, and collect information on the current status of archaeological sites on base.

New activity is any trespassing, illegal off-road vehicle riding, shooting, vandalism, illicit modern dumping and looting. Fence and gate damage is documented when there is actual physical damage to the perimeter of the base boundary fences or gates.

Fence and gate damage is treated as a separate record because it is directly related to base security, and not necessarily archaeology. Documented damage includes evidence of someone trying to get through fencing such as strand separations, cut strands, removal of T-posts and the driver who crashes into the fence or a gate.

Sightings and encounters are documented by range riders when they see a person trespassing onto the base, riding off-road vehicles, mountain bicycles and so forth.

Through the development of the program, sites near the base boundary have been identified as the most likely targets



VANDALIZED — Range riders will stake out various areas on base if needed and record any type of vandalism like the graffiti and bullet holes shown on a part of this old B-58 airplane.

for much of the activity listed.

"A significant portion of the range riders' field efforts are spent checking the boundary for signs of people crossing onto the base," said Rich Bark, who is the government-contracted technical lead for the program. "We look for signs of disturbance to the base perimeter fence, tire tracks on dirt roads out in the middle of nowhere and people or vehicles on those dirt

roads. We also spend time in our archaeological endeavors as well, surveying and recording new sites."

Range riders will immediately contact the base Security Forces Squadron and tell of the location of any unauthorized activity taking place within the base boundary. When dealing with incidents taking place on or near the base boundary, they will immediately call the local sheriff's department and the base Security Forces Squadron.

"The range riders are the eyes in the field," Norwood said. "Not only do they see what goes on at an archaeological site, but they also see the fences getting cut or find evidence of fence cutting. They see the out-of-the-ordinary stuff and they report it. Their presence in the field is valuable."

Range riders usually come into contact with a particular pattern of unauthorized activity and will coordinate with base security.

"Range riders are not a paramilitary group, so, they do not approach any situation," Norwood added. "With any strange instances, they will contact the proper law enforcement agency."

Since the program's inception in 2003, range riders have recorded 30 sightings and encounters, 356 instances of damage to the base boundary fence, 133 instances of new activity and collected 20 artifacts.

"Looting incidents are sometimes difficult to decipher

See *Range* page 7



Archaeological site on Edwards AFB.

PIECE OF HISTORY

A homestead made from adobe is displayed in this photo. Range riders protect pieces of history such as this, documenting any unauthorized activity that may take place on or around it.

